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Viewing cable 10SANAA271, ROYG UNVEILS INTEL-SHARING CENTER TO BETTER

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
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Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g.

#10SANAA271.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
10SANAA271	2010-02-10 10:47	2011-08-30 01:44	SECRET//NOFORN	Embassy Sanaa
Appears in these articles: http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/state_cables_show_rising_concern_about_al_qaeda_in_yemen/2011/04/07/AFrH6EAD_story.html				

VZCZCXYZ0002
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHYN #0271/01 0411047
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
R 101047Z FEB 10
FM AMEMBASSY SANAA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3764
INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 0111
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0296
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC

S E C R E T SANAA 000271
SIPDIS
NOFORN
DEPT FOR NEA/ARP AMACDONALD AND INR JYAPHE
DEPT FOR S/CT
EMBASSY ANKARA FOR CREYNOLDS
E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/08/2020
TAGS: [PINR](#) [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PINS](#) [YM](#)
SUBJECT: ROYG UNVEILS INTEL-SHARING CENTER TO BETTER
COORDINATE CT OPERATIONS
REF: 09 SANAA 2230
Classified By: Ambassador Stephen Seche for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

1. (S/NF) SUMMARY. The Counter Terrorism Unit (CTU) unveiled a joint information-sharing center aimed at coordinating information related to CT operations from all ROYG intelligence bodies in a February 3 ceremony at the CTU headquarters in Sana'a. The need for enhanced cooperation in intelligence-sharing has been highlighted by recent failures to communicate critical information to CT forces in advance of operations against al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). The center, which has been on the CTU leadership's agenda for the past six months, will include representatives from both the UK and the U.S. While the center is certainly a step forward in improving intelligence-sharing between ROYG entities, the Yemen Special Operations Forces (YSOF) was excluded, suggesting that full cooperation between Yemen's two premier CT forces requires more time and effort by ROYG and USG military leadership. END SUMMARY.
LEARNING TO SHARE

12. (S/NF) ROYG military and intelligence leaders hosted the opening ceremony of the Office of Special Security Information (OSSI), an intelligence sharing and operations planning center housed within the Counter Terrorism Unit (CTU) Headquarters in Sana'a, which PolOff and EmbOffs attended on February 3. The OSSI will include representatives from a range of Ministry of Interior (MOI) intelligence-gathering bodies, including: the Political Security Organization (PSO), the National Security Bureau

(NSB), the Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI), and the CTU's parent body, the Central Security Forces (CSF). In addition, the OSSI will include U.S. and U.K. military and intelligence representatives to work within its offices in order to promote greater intelligence sharing and improve the effectiveness of joint operations planning.

13. (S/NF) Mistakes, delayed information, and stove-piping between ROYG military and security bodies has hurt and at times jeopardized the effectiveness of recent CT operations. For instance, recent ROYG operations have been impeded by a lack of clear commands, miscommunication between CT elements regarding roles, information that was not shared until after the operation, and a reliance on sporadic cell phone calls between various units in the field during the course of the operation. U.S. training teams noted that ROYG CT elements should have held a pre-operation planning session in which all players shared relevant information, developed a cohesive strategy, and used secure, interoperable communications equipment. CTU Commander Kamal al-Sayani told PolOff that intelligence-sharing was the "number one challenge" for his forces in conducting and planning CT missions. He said that "almost 80 percent of relevant information never makes it to the tactical CTU leaders in the field." The new center is the first step towards rectifying that lack of coordination and a positive gesture of inclusion to its constituent members, including the U.S. and the U.K.

14. (S/NF) Attendees included high-level representatives from all future members of the OSSI, Presidential Guard Commander Tarik Saleh, Deputy Prime Minister for Defense and Security Rashad al-Alimi, CSF Chief of Staff and "godfather of the CTU" Yahya Saleh, Minister of Interior Mutahar Rashad al-Masri, and British Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Ivan Lewis. In his presentation on the structure and future of the new intelligence center, Sayani said that one of the stated goals of the OSSI is "to build mutual trust between all information gathering bodies" in order to more effectively target al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).

CAPABILITIES OF THE NEW INTEL-SHARING CENTER

15. (S/NF) The OSSI represents a significant expansion and improvement upon the technology housed in the skeletal office that Sayani showed PolOff in October as he discussed his concept of hosting a joint intelligence center within the CTU. The old office was small and low-tech, housing only three old computers, and lacked any sort of electronic display board or planning apparatus. All mapping was limited to hard copy maps filed in a series of cabinets, as opposed to their current "geographical support" element which has updated to electronic mapping and printing of customized maps on demand. Most notably, the previous office did not have the participation or buy-in of the other ROYG CT or intelligence gathering bodies. Now, however, the OSSI plans to establish a rotational schedule with a representative officer from each of the intelligence bodies present at all times in the OSSI collaborating with other officers on products and targeting. The OSSI came to fruition with the support of British counterparts and today includes at least 15 new computers, a large plotter for producing maps, and a briefing room.

WILL YSOF AND CTU PLAY NICE?

16. (S/NF) Yemen Special Operations Forces (YSOF), which currently has plans to reinvigorate its CT element and build an operations center of its own, may still be jockeying for the position of Yemen's premier CT force. YSOF and CTU are both seeking to procure communications systems that are interoperable with the Presidential Guard, thus allowing them to become more closely aligned with that well-resourced unit, according to DAO reporting. (COMMENT: The Presidential Guard has the mandate of protecting the President, ministerial level ROYG officials, and visiting foreign dignitaries. It is one of the only security or military units that currently possesses a dedicated, nationwide communications network. END COMMENT.)

17. (S/NF) Brigadier General Ahmed Ali Saleh, presidential son and Commander of the YSOF, was conspicuous by his absence at the unveiling. The current organizational chart of the OSSI does not include the YSOF, despite the fact that YSOF and the CTU are the two leading CT forces and would certainly need to coordinate operations against AQAP. This exclusion could be explained, in part, by the fact that YSOF is under the MOD while the CTU is under the MOI. However, considering the relatively small size of the CTU, coordination between the two will still be necessary should the ROYG wish to effectively target AQAP. The YSOF's CT battalion alone contains more soldiers than all four CTU platoons combined. The YSOF as a whole has approximately 1300 experienced soldiers stationed in Sana'a, along with regional bases in Aden, Ma'rib, Hudaydah, and Mukalla (Hadrामوت governorate), but has also engaged in recruiting campaigns in the past few months resulting in 2,000-4,000 new recruits. The CTU is best poised to respond to threats within an urban context, while the YSOF has the manpower to extend its reach to other, far-flung centers of AQAP activity, where most of the training camps and leadership are located. However, both the CTU and YSOF lack air assets and must rely on cooperation and support from the Yemen Air Force (YAF) to conduct most CT operations.

COMMENT

18. (S/NF) Despite some recent examples of improved quality of information leading up to CT operations, intelligence gaps and a lack of transparency between relevant ROYG services have long hindered CT forces in their attempt to target AQAP. Given the increased attention from Western nations following CT operations in December and January and the Christmas Day bomber attempt over Detroit, this development is a welcome sign that intelligence-sharing is improving, an area which CTU leadership and Western partners have long identified as a weakness in ROYG CT operations. The U.S. and U.K. enjoy a high level of trust and respect among ROYG intelligence and CT forces, as demonstrated by our inclusion in strategic decisions. However, the conspicuous absence of the YSOF in the center's plans and its parallel initiatives to establish an operations center indicate that the rivalry between Yemen's two premier CT forces is far from over. END COMMENT.
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